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EXPOSITION

OF

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OPPOSING THE NOMINATION

OF

MR MONROE

FOR THE OFFICE OF

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

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E X P O S I T I O N

OF

MOTIVES FOR OPPOSING THE NOMINATION OF MR. MONROE

FOR THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES.

Circumstances have arisen which make it proper to explain to the nation, and to the republican party in particular, some of the leading motives which induced the representatives of the people, in the late caucus at Washington, to oppose the nomination of Mr. Monroe for the office of president of the United States. The exposition will be brief; it is hoped it will be clear; and to every impartial mind it must be satisfactory.

The objection to Col. Monroe as a candidate for the presidency was twofold: First, As it regarded the *policy* which presented him for adoption to that high station: Secondly, As it respected his particular qualifications for the chief magistracy.

On the first point, the following considerations, founded upon facts universally known, seemed irresistibly to prescribe his exclusion. The present constitution has been in operation about twenty-seven years, during the whole of which term (excepting four years) the president has been from the state of Virginia. This monopoly of the first post in the government, so far from being considered by the Virginians as an encroachment on the fair claims of the other sections of the Union, has, by dexterous sophistry, been converted into an argument to prove, that those who question the propriety of continuing power for so long a time in the same hands, are only guided by ambition, or impelled by factious mo-

tives; as if the tenacity with which a few men, in that state, cling to the presidential succession, were not in itself an admonitory indication in them of the most ardent and unquenchable thirst for power. But this feature of local policy, odious as it is, would not have awakened a spirit of indignant resistance, had it not been apparent that, in order to ensure its success, the whole weight of the republican party, for fifteen years past, had been artfully wielded to *cut off* from popular respect and estimation, the most distinguished characters in other parts of the United States. To support this assertion, it is only necessary to recur to a few facts within the recollection and observation of every politician who has been on the public stage.

First, With the view of securing the presidency to a Virginian, a vice president for Mr. Jefferson's second term of office was selected from New York, of an age too advanced to render it probable that he would be chosen to the chief magistracy; but by rendering him the most prominent character, it formed an insuperable barrier to the pretensions of other distinguished men in that state. The claims of the elder Clinton were accordingly superseded by those of Mr. Madison. Care was taken that this circumstance should not be overlooked at the critical moment, and Mr. Jefferson, about to retire from office, in answer to an address from the legislature of Maryland, alluded to it in terms too glaring to be mistaken. The same policy was again adopted, in the selection of Mr. Gerry from Massachusetts.

The vice president of the United States should be possessed of every qualification to discharge the important duties which would devolve on him, in the event of the death of the president; and when it is taken into consideration, that merely to secure the *Virginia succession*, the best interests of the country are jeopardized, by calling men to that office who are superannuated, and past the discharge of important functions, it cannot but be viewed by the people with disgust, if not with indignation.

Secondly, About the same period the state of New York brought General Armstrong into public notice. He

had been a senator in congress from that commonwealth. His genius was feared. He was *taken off* by a foreign embassy. His diplomatic career in France was marked by spirit and ability; and at his return he became popular in the United States. He accepted a seat in the cabinet, at a time of great difficulty and responsibility. Respecting his administration of the department of war, there have been various opinions. He alledges that he experienced perpetual embarrassment in the concerns of his department, by the unusual interference of "a great civil officer of state," viz. Col. Monroe. The capture of the metropolis was adroitly seized upon as a pretext for denouncing him. The particular and personal friends of Col. Monroe, uniting with the federalists, insulted him in the streets of Washington, and Mr. Madison discharging him from office, gave the fatal blow to his reputation. Whatever might have been the conduct of Gen. Armstrong, it is evident that the *president, when he took the field, as commander in chief*, was at least equally responsible for the safety of the capital. Col. Monroe also *took the field*, and formed a part of the troops at Bladensburg.

After having thus *volunteered* his services, in a military capacity, it remains for him to account to the nation, why he was not among the troops, rallying and encouraging them, instead of precipitating himself to the rear, and being among the foremost in that disastrous, disgraceful retreat. Why did he not take measures for the security of the public buildings, which could have been defended by four hundred men properly posted in them? But General Armstrong was made the scapegoat of the transaction.

Thirdly, The severity of Virginia policy has no tenderness even for citizens of her own state, should they be sufficiently disinterested and independent to oppose this monopolizing spirit. Mr. Giles was a republican of the first grade of talents, and no one has rendered more services to the nation in the legislative body. He was known to be opposed to the elevation of Col. Monroe to the presidency, from a diminutive opinion of his

abilities. He was gradually disclaimed, and finally compelled to retire.

Fourthly, The man in Massachusetts who appeared most likely to disturb the Virginia succession was John Quincy Adams. He was removed by an embassy to Russia. Mr. Madison proffered him a judgeship, which he had the sagacity to refuse. By being constantly abroad, he will be kept from the view of the people, and his claims, which are every way superior to Mr. Monroe's, will, in this way, be prevented from interfering with the *regular succession*.

Fifthly, A prominent trait in the policy of Virginia, in regard to the presidency, and one which has made a deep impression, is the open countenance shown to the particular personal friends of Aaron Burr, on account of their long continued and persevering hostility to Mr. Clinton. The patronage showered upon the persons most in the confidence of that man, is indeed extraordinary; because not one of them had been conspicuous for services rendered to the nation, or sacrifices to promote the welfare of the republican party. Some idea may be formed of the governmental profusion, in this particular, from the following appointments, which have all taken place, within the compass of Mr. Madison's administration: viz.

William P. Van Ness, the second to Burr in his duel with General Hamilton, district judge of New York.

His brothers, John P. Van Ness, superintendent of the public buildings at the City of Washington, with a salary of 4,600 dollars, and contracts.

And Cornelius P. Van Ness, in the first instance, U. S. district attorney at Vermont; then collector of the customs for the same district; and, lately, appointed a commissioner for running the boundary line, with a salary of 5,000 dollars per annum.

Jonathan Fisk, U. S. attorney for the district of New York.

Besides several others, whom it is not necessary to designate. These all belong to that class of politicians, called Burrtes, known to be the most welcome guests at the President's House, and in all the public offices of the government. The object of this patronage is perfectly well understood. They form a small but active band of politicians in New York, and have always had a press at their command, whose attacks have been directed against De Witt Clinton, as the man most likely, from his talents and high standing with the republican party, to interfere with the "regular succession." This band is in constant correspondence, through its associates at Washington, with the administration; and all its proceedings at New York have been subservient to the Virginia policy. It was in this way that Mr. Clinton was for a long time *cut off* from the confidence of the republican party. He, however, has now regained his standing with the republicans of New York.

It is true that Mr. Clinton, in compliance with the solicitations of the N. York legislature, committed an error in permitting his name to be set up against Mr. Madison, at an unfortunate period; the same, however, is equally true as it regards Col. Monroe; with this difference, that the latter was discountenanced by the Virginia legislature, and still persevered in his opposition to Mr. Madison. The one was pardoned, and taken into favor, and the other has laboured under the weight of court proscription and denunciation. And yet it is acknowledged, by the most intelligent of Col. Monroe's friends, that as to all the endowments which should belong to the chief magistrate of this country, strength of mind, knowledge of character, decision, literary, legal, and philosophical attainments, and enlarged views of national policy, there is no comparison between him and Mr. Clinton.

This perseverance and bitterness of proscription was less pardonable, as Mr. Clinton was the most active and efficient character in revolutionizing New York to republican principles; and from the year 1799, when this revolution (which secured the election of Mr.

Jefferson) was first effected, until 1812, the era of his denunciation. was the pride, the stay, and support. the life and soul of the republican party, in that important state. That gentleman is. in all his principles of government, strictly and *sternly* a republican: as the elder Clinton was wont to say of him, he *was born a republican*. His great error was interfering with the *regular succession*, at an unfortunate period: even the *Burrites* cannot accuse him of opposing the war. But it never will be a reason why Virginia persecution should slacken, that the object of it is, in all respects, a suitable character for chief magistrate of the country; on the contrary, the furnace will glow with a heat more intense: the arrow will be dipped in a more fatal venom

Sixthly, Every distinguished republican in other states, who might justly aspire to the presidential office, having, in this manner. been thrown in the back-ground, nothing remained but to *popularize* Col. Monroe: and that was effected, as if it were, by enchantment. His former hostility to Mr. Madison was forgiven: a conciliatory dinner was provided in the neighbourhood of Mr. Jefferson's residence, at which were present Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, and Col. Monroe; and there the plan was laid. Col. M., as a preliminary step, was elected governor of Virginia, was hurried thence into the office of secretary of state; and from that moment every measure in peace and in war, on the part of the executive, has pointed towards his elevation to the chief magistracy. The press which, alas! is venal, was put at his disposal, by the patronage bestowed in printing the U. S. laws. The newspapers under his control have been constantly teeming with the grossest panegyrics; and the people, who know not the man, take their impressions only from the public prints. Even the *National Intelligencer*, which is well known to be a subservient organ of the executive, has been filled with adulation, at which a mind of the least delicacy must sicken with disgust. The hired applauders at the theatre afford not an instance of more disgusting venality.

It is thus that, *in the name of republicanism*, a few

leading men in Virginia, have outrageously violated republican principles. They have, with extraordinary art, made use of the zeal, the honest prejudices, and devotion of the republican party to further the purposes of a selfish ambition, and accomplish the degradation of every other state in the Union. Having thus, by various artifices, *cut off* from the good will of the people the eminent characters of other states, they tauntingly exclaim, *Who is so popular as our candidate!* This is worse than scorn; it is cruel mockery!

Seventhly, It is not necessary to dwell upon the circumstance of Mr. Jefferson's having, in the flood tide of republicanism, enforced an alteration in the constitution. It was unfortunate that the republicans were precipitated into that measure. They now find the evil of it. Instead of the question's being left at large between two of our best citizens, by the mode of designation now in practice an individual is enabled to intrigue directly for the office.

Eighthly, To these various causes of legitimate opposition to the Virginian *policy*, there is a point to be added, that, in some sort, touches the *honor* of the republican party. In the gloomy times of the late contest, when the city of Washington had been burnt, and the war wore a menacing aspect on different points of the frontier; when Mr. Dallas had officially proclaimed the nation a bankrupt, and Virginia found herself unable to sustain the incumbent weight of domestic odium, and foreign hostility, Col. Monroe commissioned two of his friends to declare to the republicans of congress, that he abdicated his pretensions to the presidency, and would lend his influence in the support of a candidate from some other state. But no sooner did the horizon begin to clear up, and victory at New Orleans give an earnest of the speedy return of peace, than he recalled his abdication; and the same friends, honorably indignant, as it is understood, at this proceeding, were instructed to *explain*, and state that Col. Monroe's *intentions* did not correspond with his *words*. For the truth of this statement, the curious enquirer may appeal to Gen. J. G. Jackson, or to Gen. Desha.

Ninthly, But it is not the north and east alone, over which the policy of Virginia has predominated. The minor offices have indeed been bestowed in that quarter, whilst Pennsylvania has been studiously neglected, and only escaped the abasement intended her, by the energy of the late John Smilie. The third census placed New York, in point of population, at the head of the Union. It was with grief Virginia saw herself removed, by natural causes, from that high eminence, and she resolved at least to fill the second *niche*. Accordingly the late John Dawson, a relative of Col. Monroe, and intimately in the confidence of the administration, before the bearing of the census was fairly understood, proposed in congress 37,000 as the ratio for each representative. This would have thrown Pennsylvania, by one member of congress, behind Virginia. Mr. Smilie penetrated the design, and united the Pennsylvania delegation in favor of a ratio of 35,000, which prevailed. This raised that state to an equal rank with Virginia. The files of the *Intelligencer* will amply verify these particulars. It is remarkable too, that the *policy* of Virginia has led her to shower the patronage and offices of government on *refractory* states. Her most faithful friends she most neglects. Secure in the obedience of the south, they experience but little of the blushing honors and rich patronage of office. The great and important state of North Carolina is an example of most marked and persevering neglect. Not an important officer of administration, a foreign minister,* or any other officer of importance, has been selected from that state since the adoption of the constitution. The reason is obvious. She can be *otherwise* governed; and why waste honors and emoluments on a state, sufficiently acquiescent in the views of the *succession*, when discontented and restless states call, with a turbulent voice, "*for office and patronage.*"

So many efforts, all tending to the same result, cannot have been the effect of accident. They incontestibly establish, on the part of a few leading men in Virginia, a systematic design of perpetually governing the

* Gen. Davie was, indeed, on a special mission, for a short time.

country, not upon the sound and general principles of republicanism, but by taking advantage of the generous bias, and unsuspecting passions, of the republican party, by official management, the venality of the press, and governmental patronage.

On the second point of the objection, namely, the *particular qualifications* of Col. Monroe for the presidency, the considerations against him were not less cogent and weighty. His best friends allow him to be but of moderate capacity, and slow of comprehension. This, it is notorious, gives to those around him an undue influence over his intellectual determinations, and leads him, in a throng of business, to commit the most important affairs of state to incompetent hands. Urbanity is not denied him; but that, by rendering him more accessible, lays him still more open to the artifices of imposture. A man of this cast will always keep talent at a distance, and surround himself by compliant mediocrity, and hypocritical dullness.

This slowness of comprehension, and want of penetration and decision in Col. Monroe, have been conspicuous throughout his political life. In France, he mistook his instructions and committed great blunders, or wilful errors; and was recalled by Gen. Washington. In England, also, he misconstrued his instructions, or rather perversely acted contrary to them, and signed a treaty with such mortifying conditions annexed, that Mr. Jefferson indignantly sent it back, without consulting the senate. He was recalled in disgrace. Thus disclaimed in his diplomatic career, on all sides, by federal and republican administrations, candor must allow that he has no title to rank with the first characters in America. But thus ordinarily gifted, Col. Monroe has furnished unequivocal evidence that his lust for power is insatiable.

Returning from England at a time when he knew he was not the choice of the republican party for the presidency, he coalesced with the federalists of Virginia, in opposition to Mr. Madison. Why should that gentleman escape censure on this score? The executive man-

tle is too thin to conceal the deformity. To promote his ambitious views he forced into public notice his *private* correspondence with Mr. Jefferson, and never ceased his hostility to Mr. Madison, until he was assured of being brought into the department of state. If the executive has the power to nominate as his successor a man who, notoriously incompetent, has committed the greatest political errors, and outraged the will of the republican party it is evident that election is a farce, and the voice of the people, an unmeaning sound !

Besides these weighty objections to Col. Monroe, on these main points, there are others of a very serious nature. Power has continued so long in the same hands that, in many instances, the incumbents of office appear to be losing sight of the fundamental principles of republican government. A system of *official management*, and speculation on the disbursements of office, appears to be gaining ground, that threatens to subvert the plain and wholesome provisions of the constitution. Ideas of economy are no longer in fashion at Washington ; banking and funding systems, which give rise to iniquitous stockjobbing, the art of governing by presidential patronage, and entangling intercommunications with Europe, are alone in vogue. Such a state of things seem loudly to demand a change in the executive office ; and this change never can be effected, so long as the office is transmitted from one hand to another in *regular succession*. Large balances of unsettled accounts remain unadjusted on the books of the treasury: Col. Monroe himself, it is understood, is still a delinquent on these books, to a very considerable amount. One fact, in this respect, will speak more than a volume. The late consul of the U. S. at Algiers returning home, and still having an unsettled account of some thousands of dollars, was nevertheless appointed accountant of the war department. The debt which he owes to the nation, is a guarantee of his obedience to the government in the settlement of any account, in any mode that may induce an accession of influence to a favorite candidate.

These are some of the reasons which induced fifty-

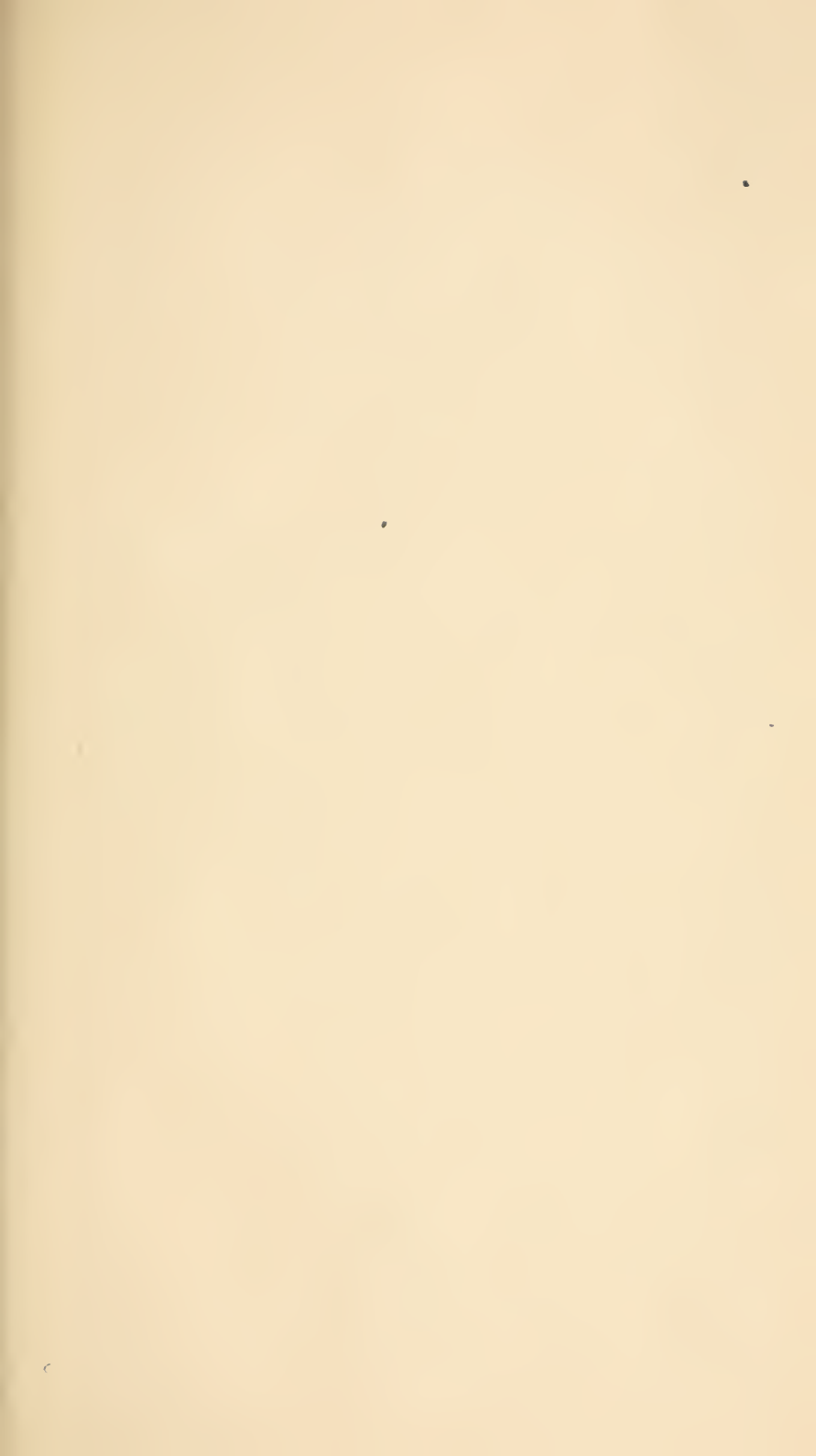
four republican representatives of the people to oppose the nomination of Col. Monroe in caucus. They supported Mr. Crawford because they knew him to be independent, virtuous and able. Had it not been for the discouraging delicacy of that respectable gentleman, and his more immediate friends, he would, beyond all question, have been nominated for the presidency. It is with regret that we announce our belief that this gentleman will not consent to be looked to as the candidate of what we conceive to be a majority of the republicans.

This candid exposition of motives is confidently submitted to the people. Supreme arbiters, if they choose, it is for them to decide whether the conduct of those opposed to Col. Monroe has been instigated by unworthy motives, or guided by sound, honorable, and constitutional principles: it is for them to determine whether they will elect, as their chief magistrate, a person recommended to them only by the casting vote of the Virginia delegation, after having in that state enjoyed that high office twenty-four out of twenty-eight years, against whom fifty-four republican delegates, representing two millions of people, after deliberate investigation and personal observation on the spot, had such great and insurmountable objections. A man recommended by the casting votes of eleven Virginians, who refused to go into caucus until made certain of success, and then only with the express declaration that they would **SUPPORT THEIR FAVORITE CANDIDATE IN OPPOSITION, IF THERE SHOULD BE A MAJORITY AGAINST HIM.** A man to whose nomination were opposed, not only several representatives of high respectability, who, from principle, did not go into caucus, but the elevated and high-minded **MACON**, whose virtue and talents are an ornament to his country, and who with propriety is ranked throughout the nation as one of the fathers of the republican party. It rests with the people to decide, whether a system of executive favoritism and patronage, subversive of the fundamental and wholesome principles of republican liberty, shall be prolonged; or whether by inducting

a new man to office, not trammelled and shackled by the retainers of the court, abuses shall be reformed, prodigality abolished, the constitution brought back to its original principles of purity, disaffection quieted, and the existence of the great republican party perpetuated.







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